

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY
SELECT COMMITTEE ON EQUAL
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
SMALL BUSINESS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

June 20, 1972

Dear Colleague:

I intend to offer an amendment to the pending Foreign Assistance Act, S. 3390, on behalf of myself and Senators Stennis, Young, Eastland, Bennett and Tower.

The amendment I propose would delete Section 515, Limitations on Availability of Funds for Military Operations, which requires prior Congressional authorization for U.S. assistance to foreign troops operating in Laos, North Vietnam or Thailand. The same provision was deleted from last year's Foreign Military Assistance Act, S. 2819, in the House-Senate Conference.

There are three important reasons I believe the Senate should delete this provision now. First, it is in direct conflict with funding programs already passed by Congress in the DOD Appropriations Act for FY 1972, specifically allocating funds to support Vietnamese forces and other free world forces in support of them.

Secondly, that appropriation was specifically authorized by Congress under the Military Procurement Act passed last fall, and an identical provision is currently under consideration as part of this year's Military Procurement Authorization bill. That language authorizes funds to be made available to support:

"(A) Vietnamese and other free world forces in support of Vietnamese forces, (B) local forces in Laos; and for related costs . . . on such terms and conditions as the Secretary of Defense may determine."

Section 515 of the Foreign Assistance Act thereby creates a conflict of jurisdiction, where we have agreed the Armed Services Committee should retain jurisdiction over funds to that area as long as the military operations are still underway. The effect of Section 515 would be to seriously restrict our ability to support military actions as required.

Page 2

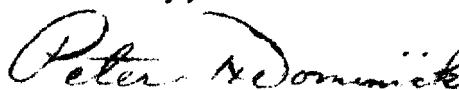
Thirdly, the restriction imposed by Section 515 would seriously frustrate efforts of local forces, particularly in Laos, to weed out communist sanctuaries with the aid of foreign troops such as the Thai irregulars. In fact, the interpretation of Section 515 could even restrict our support for Vietnamese forces seeking out communist sanctuaries across the border into Laos or Thailand.

The primary objective of the Nixon Doctrine is to reduce the American military presence worldwide. This is predicated on strengthening our friends and allies, however, and providing assistance other than American troops. At a time when the security of Southeast Asia hangs in the balance, when we are close to arriving at a stable military situation, it would be tremendously disruptive to give the North Vietnamese public notice that we will no longer support the full effort to prevent them from regrouping for future attacks on South Vietnam in bordering neutral countries.

I hope you will join with me in moving to strike Section 515. If you need further information on my amendment, please call Charlie Kendrick or Cheryl Klein on extension 55852.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Peter H. Dominick".

Peter H. Dominick
United States Senator

PHD:ck